

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-7012

August 27, 2016

The Honorable James Comey
Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation
Federal Bureau of Investigation Headquarters
935 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20535-0001

Dear Director Comey:

I have recently become concerned that the threat of the Russian government tampering in our presidential election is more extensive than widely known and may include the intent to falsify official election results. The evidence of a direct connection between the Russian government and Donald Trump's presidential campaign continues to mount and has led Michael Morrell, the former Acting Central Intelligence Director, to call Trump an "unwitting agent" of Russia and the Kremlin. The prospect of a hostile government actively seeking to undermine our free and fair elections represents one of the gravest threats to our democracy since the Cold War and it is critical for the Federal Bureau of Investigation to use every resource available to investigate this matter thoroughly and in a timely fashion. The American people deserve to have a full understanding of the facts from a completed investigation before they vote this November.

As you know, Russia's intent to influence the outcome of our presidential election has been well-documented by numerous news organizations. For example, it has been reported that your agency is currently investigating the cyber theft of thousands of documents from several Democratic organizations, including, but not limited to, the Democratic National Committee (DNC) and the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC). Already, a consensus of national security experts publicly concluded that actors of the Russian government carried out these cyber attacks.

It is of vital public interest to understand the chain of custody of these illegally obtained documents from the time they were stolen to the time of public dissemination, including any evidence of complicit intermediaries between the Russian government, those who leaked the material and any United States citizen.

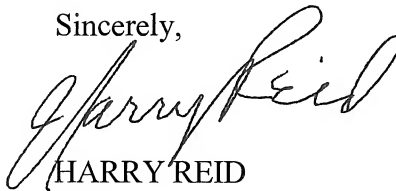
For example, it has come to my attention that last week, video evidence came to light of an individual with long ties to Donald Trump and his top campaign aides claiming to be in communication with WikiLeaks, the organization that posted online the 20,000 DNC documents illegally obtained by Russia. The prospect of individuals tied to Trump, Wikileaks and the Russian government coordinating to influence our election raises concerns of the utmost gravity and merits full examination.

Further, there have been a series of disturbing reports suggesting other methods Russia is using to influence the Trump campaign and manipulate it as a vehicle for advancing the interests of Russian President Vladimir Putin. For example, questions have been raised about whether a Trump advisor who has been highly critical of U.S. and European economic sanctions on Russia, and who has conflicts of interest due to investments in Russian energy conglomerate Gazprom, met with high-ranking sanctioned individuals while in Moscow in July of 2016, well after Trump became the presumptive Republican nominee. (The same individual recently broke precedent by giving a speech critical of U.S. policy while in Moscow.) Any such meetings should be investigated and made a part of the public record. Indeed, the recent staff changes within the Trump campaign have made clear that the Trump campaign has employed a number of individuals with significant and disturbing ties to Russia and the Kremlin.

The foregoing - and more - has led me to believe that this matter should be fully investigated and the investigation made public.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Harry Reid". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

HARRY REID
Democratic Leader